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A
DECLARATION
OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
OF THE
GENERALL ASSEMBLY
TO
The whole Kirk and Kingdome
of SCOTLAND,
CONCERNING
Present dangers and duties, relating to
the *Covenant*, and *Religion*.



Printed at Edinburgh by EVAN TAYLOR, and reprinted
at London for H. H. 1648.

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DECLARATION

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OF F. L. DAY

JUNE 1, 1916

CONCERNING
Present dangers and duties relating to
the Church and Religion.



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Edinb. 1. Martii. 1648. Post meridiem.

**A DECLARATION of the Commissioners of
the Generall Assembly to the whole Kirk
and Kingdome of Scotland, concerning present dangers,
and duties relating to the Covenant and Religion.**

IF in a time of so great and eminent danger to Religion and the cause of God, the Trumpet in Zion should give no certaine sound, nor the watch-mens Tower any seasonable warning, it might be justly charged upon us as a sinfull neglect of duty, and the blood of many thousand souls might be required at our hands. Therefore so far as we have discovered the dangerous plots and snares of the malicious and crafty adversaries of this cause; We shall freely and faithfully make the same known; trusting that all who would not make shipwrack of faith and a good conscience, will carefully avoid as well hid as manifest rocks, when they are warned of them.

After the solemn League and Covenant of three Kingdomes had so prospered against the enemies and opposers thereof, as made them dispaire of overthrowing it in any such way of a direct opposition; They begun with much wit and industry to indeavour a dividing of the ends of the Covenant, and an altering of the first principle and state of the cause. Upon the one hand, the Sectaries in England, (according as is formerly represented by the late Generally Assembly in their Declaration to their Brethren

of England, and by our Remonstrance to the Committee of Estates of the 13. of October last have by fraud and violence endeavoured the subversion of Religion; whose exorbitant insolency being now in Armes is so unsupportable, that no man can doubt but all the Articles of the Covenant are in danger by them; the vile errours, wicked heresies, and intolerable blasphemies daily growing among them can hardly be reckoned up; all which are mightily aggredged by the lawlesse and godlesse toleration thereof; and least Parliamentary authority should curb this monstrous insolency, they have not onely refused Orders for disbanding, but have forced Orders for their own standing, and do over-rule Parliament, King, City, and Country to the trampling under foot all government Civill and Ecclesiasticall, and to the terrour, oppression, and apparent ruine of all the truly, godly, and sound lovers of the solemn League and Covenant. On the other hand the Prelaticall and Malignant party have catched at, and studied to make advantage of some parts and clauses of the Covenant, without keeping all the links of that golden chain fast together.

This design of receding from the former principles, and staring the publike cause otherwise then it was stated by both Kingdomes when they joyned in Covenant and Armes, may abundantly be discovered by two instances; First, the designe hath been so fast and so far driven on, that although the fourth Article of the League and Covenant was clearly framed and intended against the Malignant party; And although there was one expresse Article in the Treaty between the Kingdomes for swearing and subscribing the League and Covenant by both Kingdomes as a more neare tye and conjunction of both for their defence against the Popish Prelaticall and Malignant party and their adherents; And although in the Declaration of both Kingdomes in the year 1643. It was declared that all such as would

would not speedily take the Covenant, and joyde with all their power in defence of this cause, are to be censured and punished as professed *Adversaries & Malignants*; Yet some are not ashamed to plead for the Malignant party, as if they were friends, rather then enemies to this cause, and as none were now to be looked upon as dangerous enemies to the cause, but the Sectaries only; whereas the word of God and the experience of former times, not only teacheth us to beware of dangers from the fraud, as well as the force, from the plots as well as from the power of enemies; but also setteth before us sad examples of great unexpected miseries, and mischiefs brought upon the people of God, from enemies once broken and quashed; when they got again the power of the sword, & opportunity to act whatsoever cruelties their inveterate malice & enraged spirits put the upon.

The other instance is, that although in the Covenant, the duty of preserving and defending the Kings Majesties person and authority be joyned with, and subordinate unto the duty of preserving and defending the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdomes; & although from the beginning of this cause, the good safety & security of Religion hath been principally sought after and insisted upon; yet solicitations, persuasions, and indeavours have not been, nor are wanting for His Majesties restitution to the exercise of His royall power, and for expouling His Majesties quarrell, notwithstanding his not granting of the publike desires concerning the Covenant, and Religion: And this course is clearly contrary to the declared resolution of the Parliament of this kingdom, after advice desired from us, upon the case concerning the King then propounded to us: And it is no lesse contrary to the principles and professions of the convention, and of the Committee of Estates, before any such advice was desired or had from us: yea all along, and in the whole course of the publike proceedings, the

settling and securing of Religion hath been so much stood upon, that Malignants who intended a new state of the cause did well perceive how great difficulty, and how small hopes there was of satisfying this Kirk and Kingdom with any thing else, while unsatisfied in the point of Religion; and therefore all possible care hath been taken by them whereby to have some specious and fair pretences of satisfaction in the businesse of Religion.

And here, as we do not disapprove, but highly commend the worthy pains of such as did indeed endeavour to bring the Kings Majesty a greater length, even to give full satisfaction in point of Religion; so we cannot but take notice of that report which many did lately entertain and spread in this Country; namely, that His Majesty hath given satisfaction to the desires of this Kirk and Kingdom in point of the Covenant and Religion.

If His Majesty had indeed given such satisfaction, we should rejoyce at it as much as any, and however shall not cease to pray for his Majesty, that God would give him repentance & remission of sins, & incline his heart to the love of the true Religion and Reformation; and that his Royall Person may be preserved from all harm & violence. And being now (as we formerly remonstrate on *October 13.*) very sensible of the present danger his Majesties person & Monarchicall government is into by that prevalent party of Sectaries; We shall, so far as concerneth the duty of our places & callings, endeavour the preservation of Monarchicall government in his Majesty, and his posterity according to the Covenant; not being ignorant what confusions and calamities use to attend the change either of the government it self, or of the Royall line. Nevertheless the Country being so generally possessed with so dangerous a mistake, and misunderstanding of so great a businesse; and his Majesty himself professing in his Letter to us, dated at *Clarisbrook*

Clarisbrook

Windsor Castle, Decemb. 27. last, that he hath resolved so far to agree to the desires of this Kirk & Kingdom concerning the Covenant and settling Religion, as he is confident shall give us satisfaction; It now we should be silent, we might be understood as tacitly consenting & acquiescing. We are therefore necessitated for undeceiving the Nation, & for acquitting our selves, to declare that a narrative of the state of publick affairs, having bin made to us by those who were entrusted for that effect, & since delivered to us in writing, we have more especially taken to our serious thoughts so much of that narrative as was from his Majesty made known unto us, as his resolutions for satisfaction in point of Religion. The first Article wherof is as followeth.

1. For the Covenant, his Majesty giving belief to the professions of those who have entered into the League and Covenant, and that their intentions are really for preservation of his Majesties person according to their allegiance, and no ways to diminish his just power and greatness, is content so soon as he can with freedom, honour, and safety, be present in a free Parliament to confirm the said League and Covenant by Act of Parliament in both Kingdoms, for securing of all those who have taken or shall take the said Covenant, provided that none who is unwilling shall be constrained to take it.

Which Article hath nothing in it of his Majesties affection to, or liking and approbation of the Covenant, but only what he is content to yeild in order to His own interest. Yea, an Act of Parliament for security of those who have taken or shall take the Covenant, doth or may suppose some fault, or somewhat justly challengable in the taking of the Covenant, which needeth an Act of indemnity. Next the offer is but conditionall, and hath in the bosoms of it an complication of such & so many conditions as might open a door to some evasion or other, by multiplying exceptions, difficulties, and various notions, either concerning the professions of those who have entered into the League and Covenant, or concerning his Majesties just power & greatness,

of his Majesty, concerning his freedom, honour, safety, or con-
 cerning a free Parliament. And although the concession
 were certain & absolute, it amounts to no more, but to a lea-
 ving of the Covenant arbitrary; which is contrary to the
 Acts of the General Assembly & Parliament in this King-
 dom; to the Declaration of both Kingdoms before entered;
 & to some of the chief Propositions of Religion once agreed
 upon by both Kingdoms for a safe & well-grounded peace,
 viz. The Proposition concerning his Majesties swearing &
 signing of the League & Covenant, and enjoying by Act
 of Parli. in both Kingdoms the ruling thereof by all the
 Subjects in the three Kingdoms, with such penalties as shall
 be agreed upon by both Kingdoms: so that the first Ar-
 ticle of his Majesties offer is a most manifest altering of the
 state of this cause. It is also a strengthening of the hearts &
 hands both of the Sectaries and of the Malignant party, a
 partaking and conniving at the sin of all those in the three
 Kingdoms who have refused, or shall refuse to enter into
 the League and Covenant, an introducing of a detestable
 Indifferency or neutrality in this cause which so much con-
 cerneth the glory of God, the good of the Kingdom, and
 the honour of the King. And therefore we have judged this
 Article not only unsatisfactory, but destructive to the
 Covenant. Neither are we moved with that objection
 which is hinted, concerning the constraining or inforcing
 of mens consciences? They refuse a necessary duty who re-
 fuse to take the Covenant; and the penalty or punishment
 of such refusal is no constraining of the conscience, more
 then the penalty or punishment of a Subject who refuseth
 to take the Oath of Allegiance is a constraining of the con-
 science to Loyalty, or more then the punishment of Idola-
 ters, Blasphemers, and Seducers, mentioned so often in
 Scripture, can be called a constraining of the conscience to
 the fear of God.

The words of the second Article are these: *His Majesty will likewise confirm by a Bill of Parliament in England, Presbyterian Government, the Directory for Worship, and Assembly of Divines at Westminster for three years, so that his Majesty and his household be not hindered from using that form of Divine Service he hath formerly practised: and that a free debate and consultation be had with the Divines at Westminster (twenty of his Majesties nominators being added unto them) and with such as shall be sent from the Church of Scotland, whereby it may be determined by his Majesty and the two Houses how the Church Government after the three years shall be fully established according to the word of God.*

For ought we know the conditions couched in the first Article are also to be understood in this and the following Articles: However this second Article as it is but the same in substance with some of his Majesties concessions in former Messages, so that which is proposed in it, is but a Toleration of Presbyterian Government in *England*, and that but for three years, and is a direct allowance, at least of the Book of Common Prayer in his Majesties Household: and moreover, by the second Article not only a door is left open for re-establishing Prelacy and the Service Book; But the happy progresse already made in the Reformation, and uniformity of Religion according to the Covenant in a confession of Faith, Directory of Worship, Form of Church Government & Catechisme is set aside as so much lost labour, in order to a future settlement. Free debate with any of the Prelaticall party nominated by his Majesty (when there was any such occasion) hath not bin declined: But we have great cause to be tender of unsettling and razing a good foundation already laid in the work of Reformation. And whereas his Majesty will have it determined by himself, and the two Houses, how the Church Government after the said three years shall be established according to the Word of God: This doth at once cut off three of the most materiall Propositions concerning Religion formerly

ly agreed upon by both Kingdoms, and from both tendered to his Majesty, (though some of them be now laid aside by the two Houses of the Parliament of England), namely, The third Proposition, *for abolishing Arch-bishops, Bishops, &c.* The fifth Proposition, *That Reformation of Religion according to the Covenant be settled by Act of Parliament, in such manner as both Houses have agreed, or shall agree upon after consultation had with the Assembly of Divines;* And the sixth Proposition, *That such unity and uniformity in Religion according to the Covenant, as after consultation had with the Divines of both Kingdoms, Assembled at Westminster, is, or shall be jointly agreed by both Houses of the Parliament of England, and by the Church and Kingdom of Scotland, be confirmed by Acts of Parliament of both Kingdoms respectively.* Of which three Propositions, there can be no hopes (as to his Majesties consent or concurrence) if the offer now made concerning a determination by his Majesty and the two Houses, be compared with his Majesties claiming of a negative voice, and with his Message of *Novemb. 16.* in which He declared that both in relation *as he is a Christian and as a King, he cannot give His consent to the abolishing Arch-bishops, Bishops, &c.* Believing that this Order was placed in the Church by the Apostles themselves, and that his Majesty is also bound by his Coronation Oath to maintain it. And this Message of *November 16.* His Majesty adhereth unto, in his Answer to the Bills and Proposition, presented to him at *Carisbrook Castle;* which Answer is dated *Decemb. 28.* and so after his Majesties Letter to us. Upon these and the like considerations we have found the said second Article of his Majesties offers in point of Religion to be destructive to Presbyteriall Government, the Directory of Worship, and the uniformity intended according to the Covenant.

For the third Article delivered to us in these words. *And for suppressing of Schisme and Heresies, his Majesty is content and most willing that an effectuall course be taken by Act of Parliament, and all other ways needfull and expedient for suppressing the opinions and practises of Antinomians, Arians, Socinians, Antiscripturists, Anabaptists, Arminians, Familists, Brownists, Separatists, Independents, Libertines, and Seekers, and generally for suppressing all Blasphemy, Heresie, Schisme, and all such scandalous doctrine or practises as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity (whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation) or to the power of Godlinesse, or which may be destructive to order or government, or to the peace of Church or Kingdom.*

As we do Approve of the Suppression of the particular Heresies and Schismes ennumerate in his Majesties offer; So we see not how it can be reconciled with his Majesties Message of *Novemb. 16.* in which there was a concession to all such as differ from Presbyteriall Government: And do further find the Article dangerous and defective in omitting Erastianism, and other dangerous errors, especially Popery and Prelacy, which may prove destructive to the Covenant in ministring the occasion to Papists and Prelats to plead for a toleration, although the Covenant bind us to endeavour the extirpation both of Popery and Prelacy.

Having now discovered the snares and dangers, We shall in the next place most humbly and seriously propose and recommend some wholesome seasonable and pious counsels to all the members of this Church and Kingdom, especially to the Honourable and High Court of Parliament, and to the Brethren of the Ministry, which may also serve to expresse our sense concerning the whole matter contained in that narrative delivered to us in writing, so far as is competent and fit for us to give any Judgment thereupon.

First of all, we exhort all and every one to make more conscience of endeavouring a reall Reformation of them-

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 selves and their Families, and of the places in which they live, then ever yet they have done; to be more serious in searching their hearts, considering their waies, and purging themselves from all filthinesse of the flesh and spirit to perfect holines in the fear of God; to oppose wickednes and profanesse, promote the power and practice of Godlines, and to be deeply humbled before the Lord for neglecting these things so much, and so long; with all employing and improving Christs all-sufficiency, and striving to exercise faith in him for the grace of mortification and sanctification, as well as for remission of sins and peace with God; that being implanted and rooted in him, we may grow up as trees of Righteousnes, the planting of the Lord that he may be glorified; for without amendment of life, and bringing forth of better fruit, the fierce wrath of the Lord cannot turn away from us.

Secondly, as men desire they may not be led into temptation, but may be guided in safe and right paths, in the midst of so great difficulties; Let them avoid the company and councell of the ungodly, whereby even good men, have been oft times most dangerously ensnared; Let all that fear God choose the Testimonies of the Lord for their counsellours, be much in prayer and searching the minde of God in his word without leaning to their owne understanding, or consulting with flesh and blood in cases of conscience.

Thirdly, seeing 'tis no act of wisdom but of folly, so to shun one danger as to run upon another as bad or worse; Let us therefore avoid enemies and beware of dangers on all hands: We cannot see but the cause of God, the true Religion, the Covenant, Presbyteriall Government, this Church and Kingdom, and whatsoever is dearest to us will be in as great danger, if the Prelaticall party prevail, as now they are into by the power & prevalency of Secularies in England, who have made the Covenant and begun reformation

to be laid aside and hindered the promoting thereof. So that there is a necessity to be apprehensive of dangers, and attentive to remedies on both sides, and to beware of compliance with, and connivance at Sectaries on the one hand, and Malignants on the other.

Fourthly, when we speak of Malignants, we desire that the distinction may be remembered, which was made in the solema Watning to the Kingdom from the Generall Assembly in Feb. 1645. viz. That the cause is in very great danger from two sorts of Malignant Enemies: First, from such as have openly displayed a Banner, or joyned in Armes and professed Hostility against the cause, and such as adheard thereunto: Secondly, from secret Malignants, Discovenanters, and besome Enemies. This second sort may by still known by some Characters, given both at that time and before that time. As by their slandering or censuring the Covenant of the three Kingdomes and expedition into *England*, in the year 1643. as not necessary for the good of Religion, or safety of this Kingdom, or as tending to the diminution of the Kings just Power and greatnesse. By their confounding of the Kings Power and just Authority, with the pretence and abuse thereof by Commissions, Warrants or Letters procured from his Majesty by the Enemies of this cause and Covenant. As if none were Faithfull and Loyall to the King, who oppose such men and their wayes; By their Splēen, Malice, and callumnies against such as God hath made eminently instrumentall in this cause, and now resolve to be constant to the end in their first Principles, as if such men were the Kings Enemies who are most zealous for the good and safety of Religion; By their commending, justifying or excusing other known Malignants, and by their conversing or intercommuning with excommunicate delinquents. Unto which Characters time and experience give us occasion to adde some others, as namely,

Their unwillingness and declining to reckon Malignants among the Enemies of this cause from whom danger is to be apprehended; Their disjoyning and dividing the duty of endeavouring the Kings Majesties preservation and restitution, from the duty of preserving, defending, sealing and securing Religion; As if we might and ought to pursue the former without the latter while both are in danger; Their maligning of, and uttering malicious words against faithfull and Zealous Ministers, and against this meeting and Judicatory, appointed by the Generall Assembly: Lastly, their crying up or down of parties or persons, & even of the Sectaries themselves according as they have more or lesse hopes of advantage from the to their own designs: For tis not long since such men made light account of any dangers, which were apprehended from the prevalent faction of the Sectaries in *England*; There being then some hopes of a compliance and combination between them and the Malignants: Which is an infalible demonstration that such mens pretended Zeal against those Sectaries now is not from the right Principle: Wherefore let all such dangerous persons as we have here deciphered and be carefully observed and avoided, as men would keep themselves pure, and free of snares: And let Presbyteries be diligent to discover, trie, and censure any of this kind in their bounds, that they may be able herein to give a good account of their diligence; As also that they be carefull to discover, try, censure any trafficking Sectaries, and all such as favour their opions and wayes.

Fifely, Though we esteem that prevalent faction of Sectaries with their abettors and adherents, Presumptuous and malicious Enemies to Religion, King, and Government: Yet we hold it is our duty to labour to remove and prevent all occasions of jealousies and suspicions betwixt the Kingdomes; and to doe or say nothing that may breed mis-
der-

derstandings, breake off correspondence, weaken the confidence or infringe the Union and peace betwixt the two Kingdomes so happily established in His Majesties presence, and with his Royall consent in both Parliaments; A caution as necessary now as when it was given above five years agoe in a Warning from the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly, met in this same place, Jan. 4. 1643. And Generally we desire that all the Articles & clauses of the solemn League and Covenant may be kept inseparably and inviolably linked together & that there may be great tendernesse and care to avoid every thing which may be interpreted as a contradicting or abandoning of the former principles, proceedings, petitions, protestations, Remonstrances, and Declarations of this Kirk and Kingdome in the pursuance of this cause; and more especially to take good heed that Scotlands desires, do not mount higher for the King, and fall lower in the point of Religion, then they were at our first undertaking and ingagement in this cause.

Finally, we do most seriously obtest all the people of God in this Nation, and especially the estates of Parliament, by their love to the cause of God, by their solemn Vowes and Covenants, by their first principles and professions, by their former zeale and sincerity, by the many blessings of God, and his great works done for us when our zeal and integrity was greatest in this cause, and by all the curses and judgments of God which his word denounceth against backsliders and Covenant-breakers, that they may all the dayes of their lives continue firme, stedfast, and faithfull in their Covenant with God, and one with another, and make good their former professions in a time of temptation and difficulty, without wavering or falling off to the right hand, or to the left, and as many as walke according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the *Israel* of God.

A. K. R.

F I N I S.